

# Statewide Initiatives Update

## January 16, 2009

### Quality First!

The Quality First website is now available and is being continually updated with new information. The on-line application was released as planned on January 12, 2009, and over 200 applications were received during the first three days. These applications came from Kingman, Whiteriver, Rimrock, Sierra Vista, Tucson, Phoenix, Gilbert, Scottsdale, Mesa, Glendale, Yuma, Prescott Valley, Oro Valley, Green Valley and other areas reflecting the geographic diversity of the state. In addition, we have applications from providers of all types, including school districts (both Early Childhood Block Grant preschools and early childhood special education), faith based providers, family home child care providers, private providers of small and large centers, programs run by corporations (like KinderCare and La Petite), non-profit, and for-profit. We will be monitoring to determine whether to target additional outreach to specific types of programs or areas of the state.

The development team has also completed the automated systems work for determining eligibility through the database and has entered all four assessments (ECERS, ITERS, FCCRS and CLASS) into the database to make them functional for the assessors. The team has begun work on the system and criteria for evaluating applicants for participation in Quality First and will be creating secure access points to the FTF database for coaches, assessors, FTF staff and participants.

The Quality First video created to help solicit applications of early care and education providers was completed on schedule. It is on the FTF website and YouTube, and CD's have been sent to regional coordinators, Quality First grantees and others providing outreach and training to providers.

Over 5,000 Quality First brochures were mailed to all regulated child care homes and centers, and an additional 4,500 copies were distributed through FTF regional coordinators, policy staff and community partners. Informational packets with more detailed descriptions of the program components were sent to all FTF regional coordinators, Quality First grantees and community partners, along with instructions on providing outreach to early care providers. Outreach activities are being tracked on the FTF intranet to assist with future communication and marketing efforts.

An Orientation meeting was held on December 16, 2008, with the contractors for Quality First assessment and coaching/incentives. A January meeting is scheduled to continue coordination efforts.

Assessment training dates were postponed to allow more time for grantees to hire assessors and supervisors. The new schedule is:

- February 2-6 – CLASS
- February 23-27 – ECERS-R
- March 16-20 – ITERS-R
- April 13-17 - FCCRS

Interviews for the Quality First Coordinator are still in process.

**T.E.A.C.H. ® ARIZONA**

Foundational work is now occurring to prepare for the “launch” of T.E.A.C.H. ® ARIZONA. The administrative home, Association for Supportive Child Care (ASCC), is developing and refining models for the initial scholarships in collaboration with First Things First. These models must be approved by Child Care Services Association (CCSA) in North Carolina, which grants the license for the program, before they can be announced. FTF has also met several times with ASCC to refine the contractor’s understanding of the models and other components of our Arizona program.

Accomplishments and upcoming plans include the following:

- A logo for the program has been designed and approved;
- Marketing materials are being developed for outreach to early care and education providers and community colleges, with universities being included in the future;
- A telephone survey is planned with early childhood program coordinators/department chairs at the various community colleges within the next two weeks to solicit data to be included in the FTF database;
- Conversations are beginning regarding how to address FTF Regional Councils’ T.E.A.C.H. strategies; and
- The T.E.A.C.H. ® ARIZONA Advisory Committee has been formulated, with an initial meeting set for January 20, 2009.

**Child Care Health Consultation**

First Things First and the Pima County Health Department have agreed upon a scope of work and are finalizing the agreement to administer child care health consultation in Pima County, while providing training and quality assurance for the entire state. Negotiations with CAREFACTS, the database currently in use for child care consultation, are underway to link it to the Quality First and FTF database.

**Parent Kits**

The Memorandum of Understanding with Virginia Piper Trust has been completed and signed by both parties. The current inventory of parent kits is being distributed this month in order to deplete the supply. The new inventory with FTF packaging and revisions is ready and statewide distribution to hospitals and birthing centers will begin on February 2, 2009.

**Statewide Competitive Grants**

The RFGA deadline for Statewide Competitive Grants was January 7, 2009, and 30 applications were received. In addition to facilitating the external review committee, First Things First staff will provide the initial technical review of applications for completeness. The plan is to complete the review process by early February, so that recommendations can be presented to the Board during the February 24<sup>th</sup> meeting.